

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

St Lawrence Elementary School
Jody Williams

SHORT NOTES



Picture this

Good readers form mental pictures as they read. To improve your child's comprehension, read a book without letting him see it. Then, ask him to guess what the illustrations look like. *Examples:* How are the characters dressed? Is the setting bright or gloomy?

Raising good sports

You can teach your youngster to be a good sport by being one yourself. When you attend a game, clap and cheer for players who try hard, even if they're on the other team. You'll help your youngster learn to be gracious to everyone in the game.

Line them up

Sometimes kids get math problems wrong simply because they haven't lined up the numbers correctly. Try this. Have your child work problems on graph paper, using one box per number. Once she gets used to this system, she'll be able to transfer her lining-up skills to regular paper.

Worth quoting

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."
H. Jackson Brown Jr.

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Name one important thing we have today that we didn't have 10 years ago.

Brian: Me!



Study smarts

Sarah, a fourth-grader, takes a history test at the end of each month. Evan, a first-grader, has a spelling quiz every Friday. Studying is a skill these youngsters will need throughout their years of school. Help your child study effectively with these tips.

Start a habit. Encourage your youngster to treat studying as a daily assignment, not just something she does the evening before a test. For example, she might study 15 minutes every night for a spelling test on Friday. After she finishes her regular homework, she can spend a little time reviewing her notes and handouts.

Tackle textbooks. When your child has a chapter to study, have her "preview" it to increase her understanding. She should glance over headings, graphics, and photos and go to the glossary to look up boldfaced words. *Tip:* If she finds a section hard to grasp, she could read a picture book on the



topic. For a science unit on matter, for instance, she could try *What Is the World Made Of?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

Mix it up. If your youngster reviews information in several ways, she'll be more likely to remember it. She might use colored pencils to copy each spelling word or math fact onto a separate index card. Then, she can shuffle the cards and study them in a different order each time. For extra reinforcement, suggest that she spell each word or recite each fact aloud. ♥

Parent power

There are many ways you can support your child's learning and school. Here are a few ideas:

- Spend a few minutes every evening looking over handouts your youngster brings home. Fill out forms to return the next day.
- Tell your child's teachers if you can help them out at school or home.
- Make sure teachers know you appreciate their efforts. From time to time, send a thank-you note or an e-mail.
- Contact your child's teacher immediately if you see a problem. Working together will help your youngster succeed.
- Attend conferences, parent meetings, and school events regularly. ♥



Let's behave!

Did you know that getting your youngsters to behave can be fun? Try these ideas to encourage better behavior—and cut down on everyone's frustration.

Distract. Being playful can stop misbehavior, especially if it's caused by boredom. *Example:* You're stuck inside on a rainy day, and your kids begin to get cranky. Say, "Freeze! Splash time!" Fill the bathtub, cover the floor with towels, and let them play in the water with cups and boats. (*Note:* Never leave children unsupervised near water.) Or call out, "Pillow time,"



and have everyone gather in the family room for a gentle pillow fight.

Celebrate. With your children, pick a few behavior goals (get ready for bed without complaining; say "excuse me" when someone is talking). Then, get out a small jar and some marbles. Tell your youngsters they will earn a marble each time you catch them working toward a goal. When the jar is full, celebrate with an extra story every night for a week.

Note: Children often act out to get your attention. Try to spend a few minutes a day playing a game or talking with each child, and you're likely to see better behavior.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

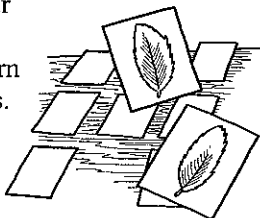
Learn about leaves

When fall comes, the ground is covered with red, yellow, and orange leaves. Try gathering them up and using them for learning. This matching game will sharpen your child's memory and help her learn to identify leaves.

Together, collect 10 pairs of matching leaves. Cut out 20 rectangles from construction paper, and glue a leaf to each one. Then, lay them, leaf side down, on the table.

Players take turns flipping over two squares. If the leaves match, the person keeps the pair. If not, the next player tries to find a pair. Take turns until all the leaves have been claimed. The winner is the player with the most pairs.

When the game ends, visit www.arbor.day.org/trees/treeID.cfm. Help your child answer questions about her leaves to learn which trees they came from.♥



Q & A

Bullying: The bystander's role

Q: My child came home from school upset because kids were picking on a classmate and wouldn't let her play with them. What advice should I give my daughter?

A: Tell your youngster that her classmate was being bullied—and that she has the power to help stop it!

There are several things she can do. She could start by standing up to the bully and saying something like, "That's not nice." Then, she might ask the child who is being bullied to join her in a game or school project.

Also, remind your youngster to report bullying to a teacher or other adult when she sees it. Let her know this is not tattling, but a way to help someone who is being hurt. You can explain: "Asking an adult to help a child who is being bullied is like asking the nurse to help a child with a scraped knee."♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Thinking games

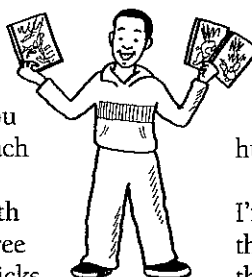
Between school, errands, and activities, my family spends lots of time on the go. I decided to use some of it for "thinking games."

I taught my kids a game my parents used to play with me, called "Would You Rather?" I offer two options and ask which they prefer and why. For example, I might say, "Would you rather live near the beach or the mountains?"

My son came up with a game he named "Three Favorites." Someone picks

a category (outfits, movies), and everyone tells their top three choices. My daughter thought of "What Doesn't Belong?" We take turns naming items and asking the others to explain which is the odd one out and why. The kids especially like this game because there can be more than one "right" answer. For example, when I named "owl," "ostrich," and "eagle," my daughter said, "Ostrich, because it can't fly." My son's answer was, "Owl, because it hunts at night."

Now they want to play all the time. I'm glad because we're having fun—and they've gotten better at thinking through their ideas.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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